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## Victor, bishop and his evasive see

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Nikolaos Gonis

### VICTOR, BISHOP, AND HIS EVASIVE SEE

A BISHOP CALLED VICTOR, acting through his notary, is one of the parties to this transaction, recorded in a document described as ἔγγραφοσ ἀσφάλεια, of which only the upper right part survives; the other party is a plurality of persons. The reference to the bishop's seat is lost, but we are not without clues. His notary, Ioannes son of Akindynos, is known from *P. Grenf.* 1 89 (9 July 525) and 90 (30 Sept. 525),<sup>1</sup> in which Ioannes' *origo* is said to be (ἡ) Ἀπολλωνοπολιτῶν, sometime taken to be Apollinopolis Magna (Edfu),<sup>2</sup> but surely to be identified with Apollinopolis Heptacomias or Minor (Kom Isfaht).<sup>3</sup> It is thus conceivable that Victor was a bishop of Apollinopolis Minor, though the neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> The papyrus seems to confirm the datings for these texts, both loans made to a soldier, suggested by A. PAPATHOMAS, *P. Heid.* VII 401.16–17 n., on the basis of the reference to the 12% rate of interest. (N. KRUIT, *BL* XI, p. 87, expressed reservations over this argument; I discuss the issue in *ZPE* 144 (2003), pp. 187–188).

<sup>2</sup> J. GASCOU & K. A. WORP, 'Problèmes de documentation apollinopolite', *ZPE* 49 (1982), p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> See J. GASCOU, 'Un acte d'arbitrage byzantin', *CdÉ* 71 (1996), p. 350 n. 33 (= *BL* XI, p. 87); the point is made more cautiously in IDEM, 'Edfou au Bas-Empire d'après les trouvailles de l'IFAO', in *Tell-Edfou, Actes du colloque franco-polonais, Le Caire, 15 octobre 1996*, Fouilles franco-polonaises 4, Cairo 1999, p. 14 n. 7. See further A. BENAÏSSA, 'Two Bishops Named Senuthes: Prosopography and New Texts', *ZPE* 166 (2008), p. 180.

Antaeopolis may also be considered. It is possible that this Victor is the bishop attested in *P. Alex.* 32, a document of questionable provenance and date; see below 3 n.

The back is blank so far as it is preserved.

### Text

(EES) P. Misc.inv. 1 82a<sup>4</sup>

13.5 x 10 cm

1 May – 31 December 528

[† ὑπατείας τοῦ δεσπότης ἡμῶν Φλ(αουίου) Ἰου]τινιανοῦ τοῦ  
αἰωνίου Αὐγούστου Αὐτοκράτορος

[ *month, day* ] ζ' ἰνδ(ικτίωνος).

[τῶ c. 30 -] τῷ πατρὶ ἀββα Βίκτωρι ἐπισκόπῳ

4 [τῇ 13-15 διὰ σοῦ τοῦ θαυμα]σιωτάτου Ἰωάννου Ἀκινδύνου νοταρ(ίου)

[παρὰ Αὐρηλίων c. 20 -] ἀτος Βησίου καὶ Πααμίου Πεκυσίου

[ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως χ(αίρειν). ὁμολογοῦμεν] διὰ τ[αύτης] ἡμῶν  
τῆς ἐγγράφου

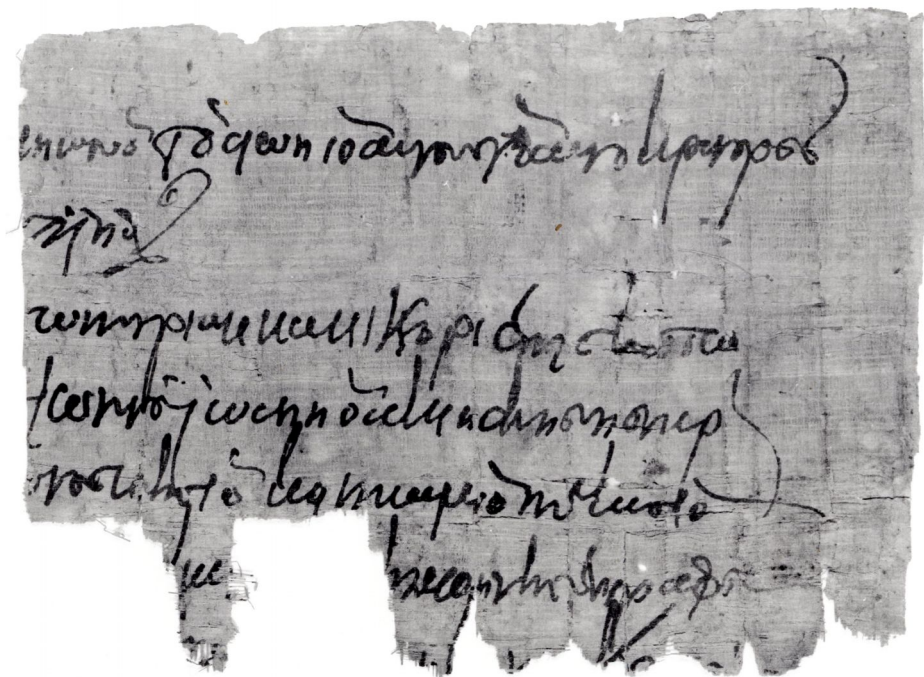
[ἀσφαλείας c. 25 ]..[ c. 5 ]..[.]..[...].κ.[.]...

2 ἰνΔ 4 ἰωαννου, νοταρ 6 l. ἐγγράφου

### Translation

In the consulship of our master Flavius Iustinianus, the eternal Augustus (and) Emperor, (*month, day*) indiction 7. To (our) ... father abba Victor, bishop of ..., through you, the most admirable Ioannes son of Akindynos, notary, from Aurelii ... – as son of Besios and Paamios son of Pekysis, from the same city, greetings. We acknowledge through this written security of ours ...

<sup>4</sup> The papyrus belongs to the collection from which the miscellany published in *P. Herm.* also came. For the origins of this collection, see *BASP* 45 (2008), pp. 70–72.



### Commentary

1-2. The indiction figure (7), if correctly read (but ζ is more promising than ε]γ, the only other alternative), indicates that the reference is to Justinian's second consulship, held in 528, the year immediately after his accession to the throne. Its earliest record in the papyri dates from 2 September 528 (*P. Cair. Masp.* 1 67091), while on 10 May 528 one still finds the postconsulate of the previous year (*P. Bingen* 131); see further *CSBE*<sup>2</sup> 205. In the Thebaid, this indiction 7 started on 1 May 528. The date of the papyrus is not likely to be later than 31 December

528, since there does not seem to be enough space for a postconsular formula in the broken part of line 1: we would have to reckon with an even larger lacuna in line 3, which is already hard to fill; and in 4 we would need to restore the name of a city that is longer than those available (see the note below). Considerations of space also make it unlikely that one should restore a regnal formula of Justinian, which would bring the date of the text to 558. There is no room for a regnal clause (*βασιλείας τοῦ θειοτάτου καὶ εὐσεβεστάτου ἡμῶν δεσπότης κτλ.*), and there is no reference to the postconsulate of Fl. Basilus, which follows after all regnal clauses of Justinian.

3. I do not see how to restore the line convincingly. τῷ θεοφιλεστάτῳ καὶ ὀκτωτάτῳ (or ἀγιοτάτῳ) would be too short for the space. (It is improbable that the line began with a reference to the place where the contract was made, since this would have been written in l. 2.) Perhaps more than two epithets were used for the bishop. On the epithets of bishops, see D. Feissel, 'L'évêque, titres et fonctions d'après les inscriptions grecques jusqu'au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Actes XI<sup>e</sup> Congr. Arch. Chrét.* (1989), pp. 801–828.

Βίκτωρι ἐπισκόπῳ. A bishop named Victor occurs in *P. Alex.* 32, taken to come from Hermopolis and to date from 448/463 (*BL* v, p. 3). Both the provenance and date of the papyrus create difficulties, so that a separate discussion seems in order. I reproduce the text first, into which I have incorporated suggestions recorded in *BL* v, p. 4, VIII, p. 1, x, p. 3, and one new: in ll. 9–10, I read πάς[η] | [ἐ]ξαργτίῳ (l. -ία) in place of πάς[ι] | [ἐ]ξαργτίοις. (I am grateful to Jean-Luc Fournet for supplying a scan.)

- [τῇ ἀγία]. [... κα]θολ[ικῇ ἐ]κκλη[σίᾳ] τῆς  
 [... πο]λιτῶν δ[ιὰ] τοῦ θεο[ε]βεστάτου καὶ  
 [ὀκτωτάτου πα]τρὸς Αββα Βίκτορος ἐπισκόπου (παρὰ) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Ψαῖου  
 4 ἐκ πατρὸς Δίου, καθαρουργ(οῦ) τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα, ἀπὸ τῆς  
 αὐτῆς πόλεως χ(αί)ρ(ειν). μεμίσθωμαι παρὰ τῆς ὑμῶν θεοσεβ(είας)  
 πρὸς ὃν ἂν [β]ουληθείη χ[ρ]όνον, λογιζόμενον ἀπὸ τῆς σήμερον  
 καὶ προγεγ[ρ]αμμένης ἡμέρας, ἥτις ἐστὶν Μεχεῖρ ὀγδόη  
 8 τῆς παρούσης πρώτης ἰ[ν]δ(ικτιώνος), τὸ ὑπάρχον τῇ ἀγία ἐκκλησίᾳ  
 καθαρουργ[γί]ον ἐν μυλῶσι δυοὶ ἐξηρτισμένοι πάς[η]  
 [ἐ]ξαργτίῳ κ[...], η καὶ π[ρὸς] καθαρ[ουρ]γικῇ χρ[ή]σι διακε[ι]-  
 [μένο]ις [

The text contains no regnal or consular date clause, but dates from 'the eighth of Mecheir of the present first indiction'. *Ed. pr.* assigned the text to

447/462, on which R. Rémondon, *CdÉ* 40 (1965), pp. 171–172, observed: ‘Les éditeurs n’expliquent pas pourquoi, et nous ne comprenons pas pourquoi, un choix est offert entre l’année 447 et l’année 462. D’ailleurs, le 8 Mecheir correspondant à un 2 ou à un 3 février, c’est 448 ou 463, qu’il aurait fallu proposer.’ In *BL* v, p. 3, Rémondon’s remarks were abridged to ‘Zu datieren 448 oder 463’, which is misleading, but unfortunately this dating was taken over in all publications that refer to *P. Alex.* 32. In any case, 448/463 is an impossible dating: the published photograph (pl. xix) indicates that the script belongs to the sixth century.

P. J. Sijpesteijn, *ZPE* 19 (1975), pp. 275–276 (= *BL* vii, p. 4) suggested reading [τῶ δικαίῳ] τῆ[ς ἀγίας κα]θολ[ικῆς ἐ]κκλ[ησίας] τῆς in l. 1. However, there is no instance of a δίκαιον of a καθολικῆ ἐκκλησία in the papyri. [τῆ ἀγία] τ[οῦ Θεοῦ κα]θολ[ικῆς ἐ]κκλ[ησίας] of *ed. pr.*, an expression known exclusively from Oxyrhynchite documents, would suit the space.

Sijpesteijn further suggested restoring [Ἐρμουπο]λιτῶν in l. 2 on the grounds of space, but a formulaic detail points away from a Hermopolite provenance. Leases of this date whose main body starts with μεμίεθωμαι followed by a construction of πρὸς with χρόνον come from the village of Aphrodite; cf. *P. Flor.* III 279 (514), 282 (520), *SB* xiv 11855 (c.550), *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67109 (565), 67110 (565). The πόλις closest to Aphrodite was Antaeopolis, so that we may consider reading [Ἀνταιοπο]λιτῶν, which has about the right length. Another nearby πόλις was Apollinopolis Minor (Heptacomias), but [Ἀπολλωνοπο]λιτῶν is too long for the space. Thus the possibility exists that both *P. Alex.* 32 and the papyrus edited here refer to the same Victor, bishop of Antaeopolis or – though less likely – Apollinopolis Minor.

No Victor appears among the few known bishops of Antaeopolis and Apollinopolis Minor (not ‘Parva’), listed in K. A. Worp, ‘A Checklist of Bishops in Byzantine Egypt (A.D. 325–c. 750)’, *ZPE* 100 (1994), pp. 296–297. A Victor is attested as bishop of Antinoopolis sometime between the fifth and the seventh centuries; see S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* I, Wiesbaden 1984, p. 113.

4. If we take l. 1 as a guide and assume that Φλαουῶν was abbreviated, the supplement that would suit the space best is τῆς Ἀνταιοπολιτῶν, while τῆς Ἀπολλωνοπολιτῶν or Ἀπόλλωνος πόλεως would fit with some difficulty. If Φλαουῶν was not abbreviated, τῆς Ἀνταιοπολιτῶν would be too short for the space.

Ἰωάννου Ἀκινδύνου νοταρ(ίου). Cf. *P. Grenf.* I 89.1 κυρίῳ μου καὶ εὐδοκίμῳ ἀδελφῶ Ἰωάννῃ Ἀκινδύνου αἰδεσίμῳ νοταρίῳ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀπολλωνοπολιτῶν; sim. *P. Grenf.* I 90.1–3. It should probably be excluded that he is the same as the notary Ioannes in *P. Grenf.* I 63; see Benaissa, *ZPE* 166 (2008), p. 180. Further, Ioannes son of Akindynos need not be recognized in Ἰωάννης υἱός, who sent the letter *P. Grenf.* I 66 to bishop Taurinos, which is to be assigned to the sixth/seventh century.

Another notary in the service of a bishop, who incidentally officiated in the same broad area as Victor, occurs in *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67295, page III, ll. 18–20 (v1): τῷ δεσπότη(ῃ) μο(υ) τὰ πάντα θεοσεβ(εστάτ)ῳ καὶ ἀγιωτάτ(ῳ) [π]ατρὶ | κ(αὶ) ἐπισκόπῳ ἀππα Κεφάλωνι Ἰωάννης υἱὸς Ψάτῳ(υ) (πρὸς ἐπίσκ(οπον) | ν[οτά]ρ(ιος) ἐμπαίδευτος.

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